

Message Text

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SUBJ: BACKGROUND AND HISTORY - ST. BARTHOLOMEW, THE FRANKFURT
CATHEDRAL

1. ORIGINALLY A ROMANESQUE BASILICA BUILT AROUND 822 BY KING
LUDWIG THE PIOUS NEXT TO A CROLINGIAN PALACE, THE CHURCH WAS
ENLARGED AND CONVERTED TO A GOTHIC CATHEDRAL IN THE 14TH
CENTURY. THE NAVE, CHOIR AND APSE WERE COMPLETED IN 1355;
THE TOWER IN 1514.

2. ALTHOUGH GERMAN KINGS HAD BEEN ELECTED IN THE CATHEDRAL
FROM THE 9TH CENTURY ONWARD, AMONG THEM THE CRUSADER FREDERICK
BARBAROSSA, THE GOLDEN BULL OF CHARLES IV (1356) MADE FRANKFURT
THE SITE OF IMPERIAL ELECTIONS FOR ALL TIME. FROM 1562 UNTIL
THE END OF THE HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE IN 1806, ST. BARTHOLOMEW ALSO
BECAME THE VENUE FOR THE ELABORATE IMPERIAL CORONATION RITUAL
IN WHICH THE EMPEROR-ELECT VOWED TO PROTECT THE CHURCH, GUARD
THE LAWS, AUGMENT THE EMPIRE, AID WIDOWS AND ORPHANS, AND
PAY HOMAGE TO THE POPE. AFTER THE SWORD OF CHARLEMAGNE AND THE
EMPERIAL RING, SCEPTER AND ORB HAS BEEN PRESENTED, THE EMPEROR
WAS CROWNED BY THE ARCHBISHOPS OF MAINZ, COLOGNE AND TRIER,
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AND THE PROLONGED PUBLIC CELEBRATION BEGAN WITH THE FESTIVE
PROCESSION ACROSS THE ROEMERBERG SQUARE TO THE ROEMER FOR
THE CORONATION BANQUET.

3. THE CATHEDRAL WAS COMPLETELY REBUILT FOLLOWING A
DISASTROUS FIRE IN 1867 WHICH OCCURRED ON THE EVE OF THE FIRST
VISIT OF A PRUSSIAN KING TO THE FORMER FREE IMPERIAL CITY.

THE FRANKFUTERS, WHO HAD BECOME PRUSSIAN SUBJECTS THE PRECEDING
YEAR, SAW IN THE FIRE A SYMBOL OF THEIR LOST FREEDOM.LEHMANN

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